

The Revelation

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Revelation 19:14-21

Vss. 14-16

- The armies of heaven are following their leader into battle and they too ride the white horses of triumph. When Jesus was arrested by a mob from the Temple, Peter drew his sword and took a swipe at a slave of the high priest. Jesus scolded Peter and told him to put away his sword, reminding him that if He had needed defending God could have sent "more than 12 legions of angels" (Matt. 26:53). Now they are coming, not to defend but to attack, dressed just as the angels we met at Christ's birth and resurrection.
- Verse 15 tells us the risen Christ returns with a sharp sword coming from His mouth, which we also saw in 1:16, and will strike down the nations as He speaks. The image is also seen in Isaiah 11:4. Here also, Christ will impose His rule with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:9).
- God's wrath is pictured in how one might stomp and crush grapes in a winepress. Blood like grape juice will flow and evil is literally stomped out.
- Christ's titles are placed in the common places of a warrior king – right where it is easiest to identify Him on a battlefield. Everyone will know that He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

Vss. 17-21

- Here now is the final battle between the forces of good and evil, though not quite the final conflict. So confident were the forces of Heaven that an angel appears in the sun *before the battle* and invites all the birds to come and feast on the bodies of the forces of evil who are about to be crushed. This is very image we see in Ezekiel 39:1-20 as God points the prophet to look to Revelation 20.

- The “beast” represents Nero, but the wicked Roman emperor is himself a representation of any human power that would place itself above God, demand the allegiance and worship otherwise due to God, and severely punishes those who will not give such allegiance and worship. And so arrayed for the final battle against Christ is the beast and all the kings of the earth and their armies, the source of their power.
- But the battle is over quickly and decisively. The beast is seized and thrown alive into the lake of fire. The false prophet too is seized with the beast. Recall that the false prophet is the system by which the rulers of Rome administrated their empire and forced common people everywhere into submission. It was the false prophet who promised everything to the people: peace, prosperity, wealth, and power if only they would worship Caesar and declare him Lord of Lords, which of course a Christian could not do. “Put your faith in the visible power of Rome, the power you know well, not in some God who you cannot see, or some crucified messiah.” So on a local level it was the false prophet, the Roman imperial system, that persecuted the first century Christians so brutally, believing that the more brutal they were to these “traitors” the more favor they would curry from Rome. So here, the false prophet too is thrown into the lake of fire.
- All the rest, the minions of the beast and the false prophet, the kings of the earth and their armies, are killed by the sword from the mouth of Christ. It doesn’t say how this is done, only that it is so. And the birds are filled with their flesh.
- Satan’s instruments are defeated and utterly destroyed. All that is left is to deal with him.